The Erotic Horror Classic Of Female Vampirism!

CARMILLA

For Adults Only...

A • AIRCEL COMICS • #2 (of 6) • $2.50/$3.00 in Canada

Based On The Story by Sheridan Le Fanu

So where were we?

Oh, yes! I was going to tell you how there was more going on in *Carmilla* than just vampires and naked women having at it with one another and what not. (Didn't I tell you last time there was one nifty sword fight in this issue?)

I'm going to let you in on a little secret here. This mini-series and two others I've written for Malibu Graphics—*Dracula* and *Invaders From Mars*—are actually all part of an unofficial trilogy. You know how us writer-types just love to write trilogies! It makes us feel like we've done a lot of work and tried to say something with meaning.

Believe it or not, this trilogy is based on a theme rather than a collection of characters. The theme in question? Maturation.

In *Invaders From Mars*, the reader follows the 12-year-old main character, Josh Acri, as he abandons the safety of love of his parents for the good of his community's and his own survival. We all have to begin that process sometime which eventually allows us to support ourselves in our own lives; most of us just don't have a Martian invasion prodding us along.

In *Dracula*, it's the maturation of society that is at issue, the abandonment of the superstitions and romance of an agrarian community for the modern and post-modern advances of the industrial and communication revolutions. In Bram Stoker's novel Dracula is an Anti-Christ figure who is hunted and killed by 19th century knights baring Winchesters and train schedules. When Count Dracula bites the dust, so to speak, the last living symbol of the Romantic Age dies as well. Society is free to progress rationally, scientifically and unimaginatively.

Here, in *Carmilla*, we explore a more personal version of maturation: sexual awakening. Our main character, Sarah, has never even been kissed when Carmilla arrives; by the end of this issue she is in love with her dark visitor. When Sarah eventually discovers the truth behind her lover's identity, she is less horrified Carmilla is a vampire than in the fact she has been betrayed. Many of us, unless prodded, tend to forget about the pain and humiliation we experienced at the hands of our first loves; in this adaptation of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's vampire story, I do my best to unceremoniously stir up some of those unpleasant memories.

Okay, now we know what Steven Jones was up to when he adapted *Carmilla*. If you're interested in what Le Fanu may have been up to when he wrote his wonderful story—you'll just have to come back here next issue. (Ain't I a stinker?)

Steven Jones

STEVEN JONES
Script
•
JOHN ROSS
Artist
•
BRENT CARPENTER
Letterer
•
ANDREW JAMES KENT
Cover Illustration
•
TOM SMITH
Cover Coloring
•
Dave Olbrich
Publisher
•
Chris Ulm
Editor-In-Chief
•
Tom Mason
Creative Director

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No subscriptions available. Scott Rosenberg/President. Chris Ulm/Vice-President. Dave Olbrich/Treasurer. Tom Mason/Secretary. Christine Hsu/Controller. Here's one for the lawyers: Opinions expressed in the introduction are those of Steve Jones and do not necessarily reflect the views of Malibu Graphics, Inc. or its corporate partners.

IV. THE HUNCHBACK

GREETINGS, MISTRESS SARAH!

HELLO, MASTER HARLEQUIN.

WE'VE NOT SEEN YOU IN OVER A YEAR.

MY PATH HAS BEEN DARK. SPREADING MY *LIGHT* HAS BEEN SLOW. BUT HERE I AM!

SHALL I *ENTERTAIN* YOU LADIES WITH MUSIC? VIVALDI? BACH?

MAYHAP A RECITATION? JONSON? THE BARD?

OR COULD SOME *EXERTION* BE THE DIVERSION YOU'RE BOTH AFTER?

"ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE *VARIOUS* ARTS AND THE CURIOSITIES AND THE ENTERTAINMENTS WHICH ARE IN MY *POWER* ARE AT YOUR BIDDING."

WILL YOUR LADYSHIPS BE PLEASED TO BUY AN AMULET AGAINST THE OUPINE, WHICH IS GOING LIKE A WOLF THROUGH THE WOODS?

THEY ARE DYING OF IT RIGHT AND LEFT, AND HERE IS A *CHARM* THAT NEVER FAILS.

ONLY PINNED TO THE PILLOW, AND YOU MAY *LAUGH* IN HIS FACE.

CIEL!

"THIS IS WONDROUS STRANGE."

SEE HERE, MY LADY--

--I PROFESS, AMONG OTHER THINGS *LESS* USEFUL, THE ART OF DENTISTRY.

YOUR NOBLE FRIEND HAS THE SHARPEST TOOTH-- LONG, THIN, POINTED LIKE AN AWL, LIKE A NEEDLE; HA, HA!

IF IT HAPPENS TO *HURT* THE YOUNG LADY, AND I THINK IT MUST, HERE I AM, HERE ARE MY FILE, MY PUNCH, MY NIPPERS.

I WILL MAKE IT ROUND AND BLUNT; NO LONGER THE TOOTH OF A FISH BUT OF A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADY AS SHE IS.

HOW DARES THAT MOUNTEBANK INSULT US SO ? WHERE IS YOUR FATHER ?

HEY ? HAVE I BEEN TOO BOLD ? HAVE I OFFENDED THE YOUNG LADY ?

MY FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD THE WRETCH TIED UP TO PUMP, AND FLOGGED WITH A CARTWHIP, AND BURNT TO THE BONES WITH THE CASTLE BRAND !

PLEASE *FORGIVE* MY FRIEND, GOOD SIR. SHE HAS SUFFERED MANY *MISFORTUNES* RECENTLY.

IF YOU GO TO THE *KITCHEN*, MADAM PERRODON WILL PAY AND FEED YOU.

THANK YOU, MISTRESS.

NOW, REALLY, CARMILLA, THERE WAS NO CALL FOR THAT.

HMMM ?

CARMILLA ?

V. INTERLUDE III
Recognition

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU WILL EVER CONFIDE FULLY IN ME ?

YOU CAN'T ANSWER PLEASANTLY; I OUGHT *NOT* TO HAVE ASKED YOU.

YOU WERE QUITE RIGHT TO *ASK* ME THAT, OR ANYTHING.

YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW *DEAR* YOU ARE TO ME. BUT I AM UNDER VOWS, NO NUN HALF SO AWFULLY, AND I *DARE NOT* TELL MY STORY YET.

EVEN TO YOU.

THE TIME IS NEAR WHEN YOU SHALL KNOW EVERYTHING.

HOW JEALOUS I AM YOU CANNOT KNOW.

YOU MUST COME WITH ME, LOVING ME, TO DEATH; OR ELSE HATE ME, AND STILL COME WITH ME, AND *HATING* ME THROUGH DEATH AND AFTER.

THERE IS NO SUCH WORD AS *INDIFFERENCE* IN MY APATHETIC NATURE.

CARMILLA!

JOIN ME, SARAH!

"JOIN ME."

"JOIN ME."

"JOIN ME."

YES.

"YES."

"WERE YOU EVER AT A BALL ?"

"NO. WHAT IS IT LIKE? HOW *CHARMING* IT MUST BE."

"I ALMOST FORGET, IT IS YEARS AGO."

"YOU ARE NOT SO OLD. YOUR FIRST BALL CAN HARDLY BE FORGETTEN YET."

"I REMEMBER EVERYTHING ABOUT IT--I WAS ALL BUT *ASSASSINATED*, WOUNDED HERE, NEAR MY HEART."

...Father and your uncle are very anxious for you to visit.

"ALL DUE TO LOVE. A *CRUEL* LOVE-- STRANGE LOVE, THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN MY LIFE."

SARAH ?

I MUST *TALK* WITH YOU.

IT'S TIME. I WANT YOU TO KNOW *EVERYTHING* ABOUT ME.

"LOVE WILL HAVE ITS *SACRIFICES*. NO SACRIFICE WITHOUT BLOOD "

I HAVE WATCHED YOU FROM A DISTANCE FOR MANY MONTHS, BUT DID NOT KNOW HOW TO WIN YOUR CONFIDENCE.

I LOVE YOU, SARAH

CARMIL... *SIR!* THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE!

WHY ? AM I THE FIRST MAN TO *DISGUISE* HIMSELF TO ACQUIRE THE FRIENDSHIP OF A LADY HE LOVES ? NO !

AND I *DO* LOVE YOU, SARAH.

BUT...

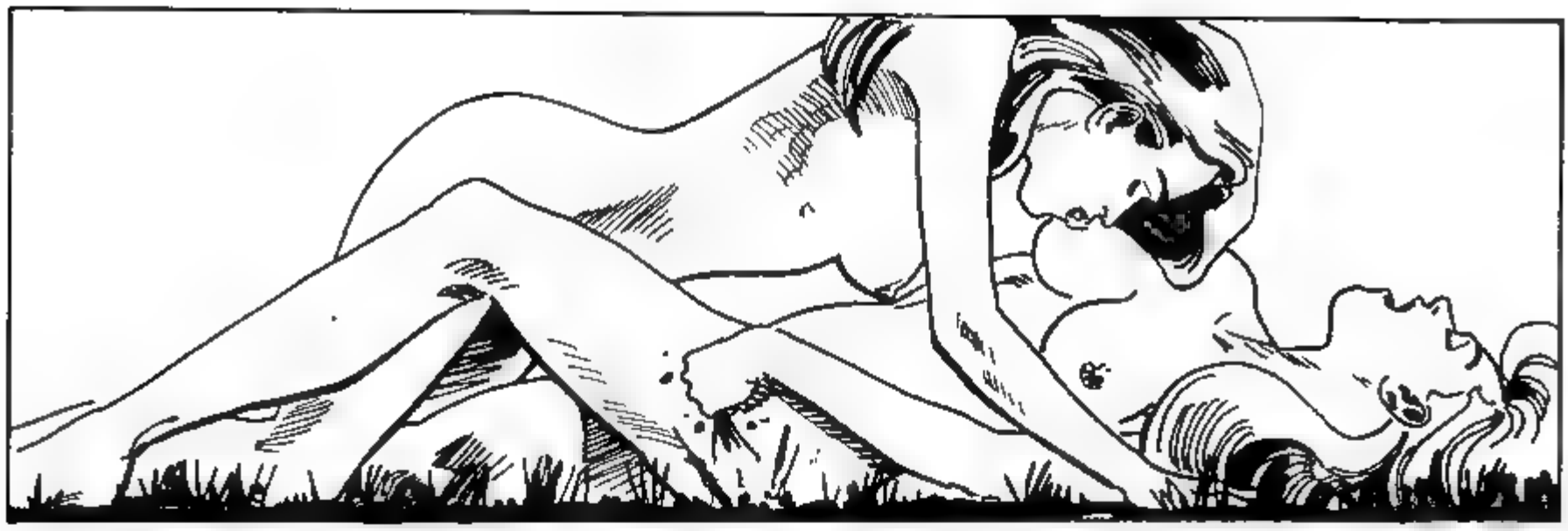
I LOVE YOU.

CARMILLA!

I HAVE BEEN IN LOVE WITH *NO ONE* AND NEVER SHALL, UNLESS IT SHOULD BE WITH YOU, SARAH.

DARLING, DARLING.

I LIVE IN YOU; AND YOU WOULD *DIE* FOR ME, I LOVE YOU SO.



MY SENSES SWOON IN ECSTASY.
I WISH YOU ALL THE JOY THAT YOU CAN WISH.

JOY SHALL RULE THE DAY AND LOVE THE NIGHT.
IN ADAMANTINE CHAINS SHALL DEATH BE BOUND.

THOU SHALT FLOURISH IN IMMORTAL YOUTH.

VI CONFRONTATION

"GOOD EVENING, GENERAL SPIELSDORF. WELCOME BACK TO VIENNA."

THANK YOU, LEWIS.

MAY I INQUIRE IF A FRIEND OF MINE, *COUNTESS DOLINGEN* OF GRATZ, IS STAYING HERE?

YES, GENERAL SHE IS.

"SHE IS IN SUITE 405, ENTERTAINING SOME.. *'GUESTS'*."

YOU!

FAR ENOUGH, GENERAL. TURN AROUND. GO HOME AND *DIE* IN YOUR BED. IF YOU TAKE ANOTHER STEP FORWARD--

405

405

"--I'LL SUNDER YOUR HEART AND THE MADAMS WILL LICK UP YOUR BLOOD."

"BOLD WORDS, BLACK-GUARD."

MON DIEU!

ENFORCE THEM!

YOU ARE QUICK, OLD MAN.

QUICKER THAN YOU'LL LIKE.

SEE?

UNNNH--!

YES, I DO. I SEE YOU ARE MORE TROUBLE THAN YOUR WORTH !

oh

FOR WHAT YOU DID TO MY NIECE, YOU BASTARD.

"AND NOW--"

--COUNTESS! IT SEEMS WE HAVE A *FAMILY* MATTER TO ATTEND TO.

WHA... *CYRENE!*

YOUR MAN, MADAM? HE AWAITS YOU IN HELL.

CYRENE? NO.

NO!

NOOO!

GAHN**!

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, A CLAP OF THUNDER, AND--

MAY THE DEVIL HIMSELF GREET YOU IN...

...Hades

IT WILL HAVE *BLOOD*, THEY SAY: BLOOD WILL HAVE BLOOD.

BY...BY THE PRICKING OF MY THUMBS!

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES.

VII. A STRANGE AGONY

Tee-nee Tee-hee

GIRLS! ISN'T IT BAD ENOUGH I SPENT THE DAY IN TOWN--

--WATCHING THEM *BURY* THE THIRD POOR GIRL TO DIE OF THIS PLAGUE IN AS MANY WEEKS ? THE DOCTOR CAN DO *NOTHING* TO PREVENT ITS SPREADING.

DOCTORS NEVER DID ME ANY GOOD.

THEN YOU HAVE BEEN ILL ?

MORE ILL THAN YOU EVER WERE.

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. I SUFFERED FROM THIS *VERY* ILLNESS, BUT I FORGET ALL BUT MY PAIN AND WEAKNESS

YOU WERE YOUNG THEN ?

I DARE SAY; LET'S TALK NO MORE OF IT.

"I WAS DREAMING. OR SO I THOUGHT."

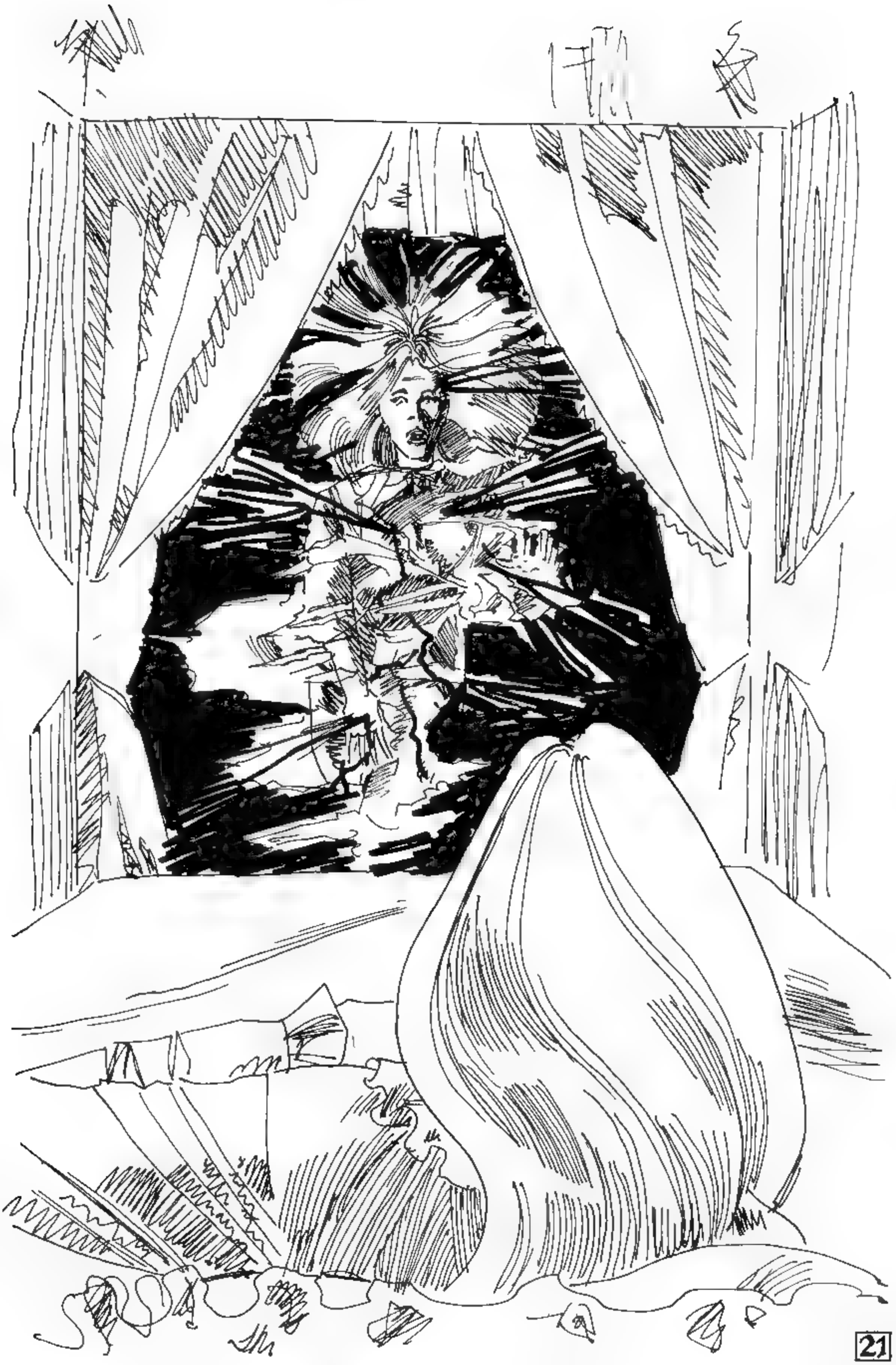
"I COULD FEEL COOL WATER RUSHING AGAINST MY CHEST."

"GRADUALLY, IT BECOME DIFFICULT TO BREATHE. I TRIED TO FORCE MYSELF AWAKE."

'AT FIRST I BELIEVED I'D SUCCEEDED."

"THEN I SAW IT."

"I COULD NOT CRY OUT, ALTHOUGH AS YOU MAY SUPPOSE, I WAS TERRIFIED."



FATHER! MADAM PERRODON!

SARAH! MADAM PERRODON! WHAT'S THE MATTER?

CARMILLA! A DREAM! SHE'S BEING *MURDERED!*

ALL THIS FUSS OVER A DREAM, LITTLE SWEET? HONESTLY.

I CAN FEEL IT, FATHER. SOMETHING'S WRONG!

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD KNOCK, SIR?

OF COURSE I'LL KNOCK, MADAM PERRODON.

CARMILLA? PLEASE OPEN UP. IT'S TOBIAS, CARMILLA?

CARMILLA! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!

YES? IS SOMETHING WRONG?

VIII. A WONDERFUL LIKENESS

knock knock

ENTER.

ARE YOU STILL WEAK ? YOUR FATHER FEARS YOU *MAY* HAVE THE PLAGUE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ? DO I NEED THE HUNCHBACK'S AMULET ?

IF I THOUGHT THAT, I WOULDN'T DO THIS.

FEEL BETTER?

A LITTLE, YES. THANK YOU.

YOU JUST NEED A LITTLE ATTENTION. A LITTLE ACTIVITY.

YOUR *FATHER* WOULD LIKE YOU TO COME DOWNSTAIRS. SOME *PORTRAITS* ARE JUST RETURNING FROM A PICTURE-CLEANER IN GRATZ.

I'D RATHER BE ALONE WITH YOU.

I HAD A DREAM LIKE *YOURS* ONCE. I THOUGHT I AWOKE TO FIND A FEMALE FIGURE, DRESSED IN BLACK, STANDING BY MY BED.

A BLOCK OF STONE COULD *NOT* HAVE BEEN MORE STILL.

AS I STARED AT IT, THE *FIGURE* APPEARED TO CHANGE ITS PLACE.

NOW NEARER THE DOOR; THAN, CLOSE TO IT, THE DOOR OPENED, AND IT PASSED OUT.

BUT NO MORE ABOUT NIGHTMARES. PLEASE GET UP. DON'T *DISAPPOINT* YOUR FATHER OR ME.

ALL RIGHT. IF YOU INSIST.

AH, LITTLE SWEET! I'M GLAD YOU'RE ON YOUR FEET.

I FORGOT WE SHIPPED SO MANY PORTRAITS!

WHY SO MANY?

SARAH'S MOTHER WAS FROM AN OLD *HUNGARIAN* FAMILY. MOST OF THESE PICTURES CAME THROUGH HER.

MANY ARE SO OLD THAT THE SMOKE AND DUST OF TIME HAD ALL BUT OBLITERATED THE IMAGES UNDERNEATH.

FATHER!

LOOK AT THIS!

OH, YES. I WAS CURIOUS TO SEE HOW *THIS* ONE CAME OUT. IT'S DATED 1698.

"THE SUBJECT IS MARCIA KARNSTEIN."

"BUT, IT'S THE EFFIGY OF CARMILLA!"

Mirabella, Countess Karnstein
A.D. 1698